Central American NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.

Editor: Michael P Birks, 061-747 5924 (Home)

Vol.III, Nº.56 July 1994

EDITORIAL

For the time being, pease address all correspondence to my home address, which is:
36 Trevor Road, Flixton, URMSTON, Manchester M41 5QH, ENGLAND.

A Provincial meeting of the Spanish Main has been arranged for Sat. 17 September 1994. The venue will be Urmston, as on previous occasions, but **NOT** the Conservative Club. They terminated my membership when I tried to pay my subscription three days beyond the deadline! The new venue will be about half a mile away at the Masonic Hall. There is ample parking, no silly intercom/lock on the door, friendlier management and a bar. A buffet lunch will be provided at a cost of £5 per head to include morning coffee. The room is not as big as previously, but it is adequate and if you get bored you can play snooker in the bar! Unfortunately the one drawback with a Manchester location is the lack of a social side for the ladies, and so I hope this will not deter you. Hotel accommodation can be arranged if required, although this has not proved necessary in the past.

Full details will be sent to everyone who responds to this editorial. It will be assumed that everyone coming will require lunch and so I shall need numbers in advance. Please let me know if you are coming as soon as possible to assist with the arrangements.

The format of the day will be similar to the York meeting last year, i.e. several twenty minute displays, a longer one, lunch, another longer one and three more twenty minute displays.

I have some maps to give away, ex National Geographical Magazine. No reply means 'too late'. I would appreciate a refund of postage in mint US/GB stamps or dollar bills.

The titles are: The universe; Canada's Vacationlands; Peoples of the Arctic; N Am's active west; Ohio Valley; Deep South (US); Central Plains (US); The Alps; Columbus's Routes; Mount Everest; Endangered Earth; Spain and Portugal; Central Rockies; Texas; Northern Approaches (US); Northern Plains (US); Japan; Pakistan & N India; Australia; Tidewater (US); History of Europe; Philippines; Atlantic Gateways (US); Hawaii; Alaska.

I have the corresponding magazines if anyone is interested.

Once again I am very short of copy and would welcome contributions. I have enough material to fill another issue or two, but all I have are small items. I do like to start each issue with a piece of some philatelic significance.

mpb

The **Central American Group** is a part of the **Spanish Main Philatelic Society,** the leading Society in the world for collectors of Latin America. The journal of the SMPS is 'The Mainsheet', published quarterly, and is available by annual subscription from the Secretary, Brian Moorhouse, PO Box 105, PETERBOROUGH PE3 8TQ, England. Phone 0733 268708. Subscription is currently £8 in Europe or $20 elsewhere. Cheques in sterling or US$ should be made payable to 'The Spanish Main'. A three year subscription of £21/$54 and a five year subscription of £30/$80 are available and payment for these longer subscriptions may be made by Access, Mastercard or Visa.

The **Central American Group** caters for collectors of Mexico to Panama. Its journal, which you are now reading, is published quarterly, and is available by annual subscription. The subscription is currently £5 in Europe or £6 elsewhere. Dollar bills, or sterling cheques payable to 'The CA Group' should be sent to the treasurer, Colin Eddleston, 19 Sion Hill, BATH BA1 2UJ, England. Phone 0225 315608. We shall be pleased to forward the relevant portions of multi-subscription cheques to the SMPS or the Chile Group.

Back issues are available to members at 75p/$1.50 each, although issues 1-20 inclusive can be purchased for £10/$20 complete. Non-members may request a sample copy for 75p/$1.50 post paid. Requests for back issues should be sent to the Editor, to whom cheques should be made payable.

The group leader is Richard Saundry, Gwrych Cottage, Godstone Road, Bletchingley, REDHILL, Surrey RH1 4PL, England. Phone 0883 742186.

The Group does not run a packet. The SMPS Packet Secretary is Brian Sylvester, 3 Russel Court, St Lukes Road, MAIDENHEAD, Berks SL6 7AP, England. Phone 0628 784555.

Although most packets are of a general nature, there are occasional specialised one country packets. Good and unusual material is always wanted.

Owing to insurance difficulties, the packet is not available to overseas members, although we shall be pleased to accept material for inclusion in the packet from them.

The Auctioneer of the SMPS is Brian Moorhouse, to whom Auction and Private Treaty lots should be sent. Brian is a dealer, and will include your name on his mailing list if requested.

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NEWSLETTER

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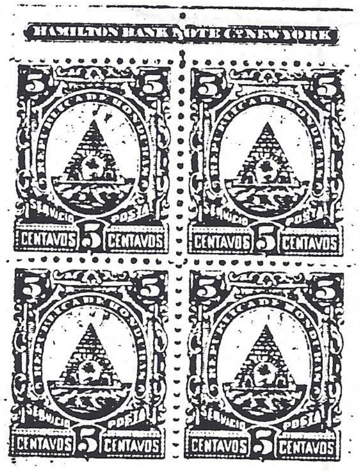
THE 1891-92 "BOGRAN" ISSUE OF HONDURAS

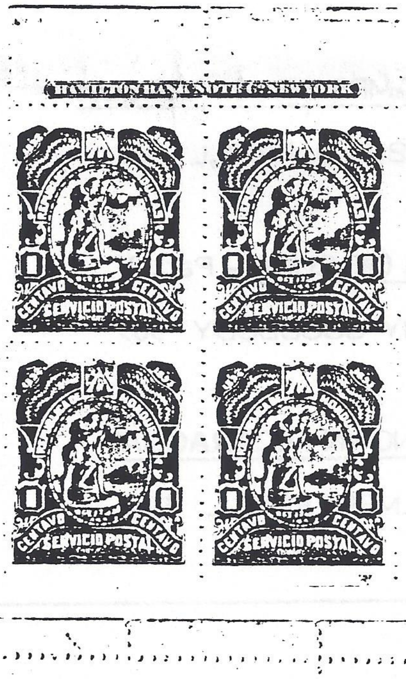
by RICHARD A WASHBURN

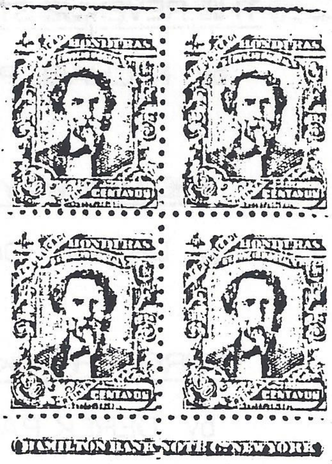
This article presents information that will undoubtedly raise questions as to the design and production of the 1891-2 General Luis Bogran issue of Honduras.

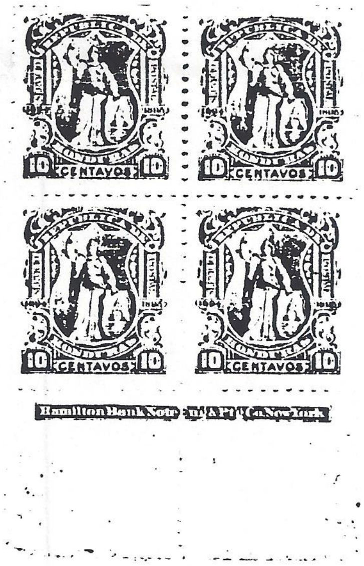
We all assume that the engraving and printing was done by the Hamilton Bank Note Company of New York. After all this firm, via their Secretary Mr Nicholas F Seebeck, signed a contract with the Government of Honduras on 20 April 1889, that obligated the company to supply a new issue of postage stamps and stationery annually for a period of ten years. Seebeck acted as Secretary for the company, but it is known that the company subsequently transferred the contract to him personally, and he in turn made a contract with the company for engraving and printing of the stamps.

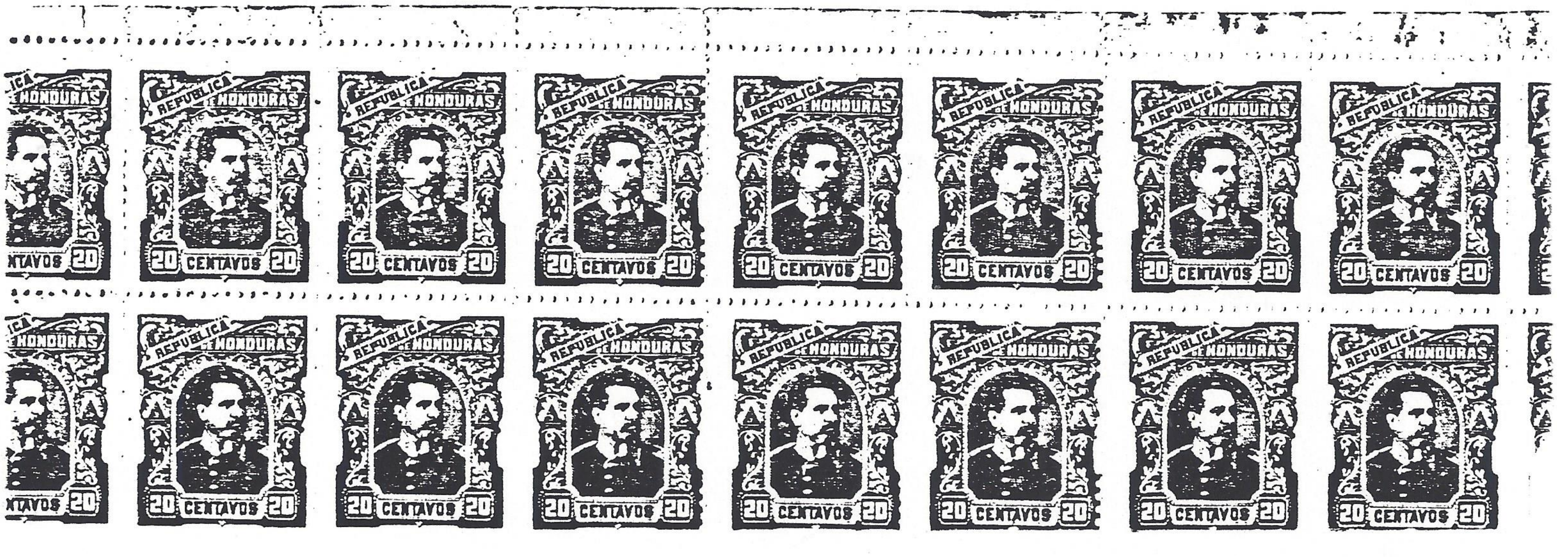
There seems to be no question that this company engraved and printed the 1890 "Arms", 1892-93 Columbus, 1893-94 "Cabanas" and the 1895 Justice issues. All these stamps have marginal inscriptions on every sheet. The 1890, 1892 and 1893 issues have "HAMILTON BANK NOTE Co. NEW YORK" on all four sheets margins. The 1895 "Justice" issue has "Hamilton Bank Note En'g & Pt'g Co. New York" again on all four sides.


HAMILTON BANK NOTE Co NEW YORK
5 CENTAVOS 5 CENTAVOS
SERVICIO POSTAL

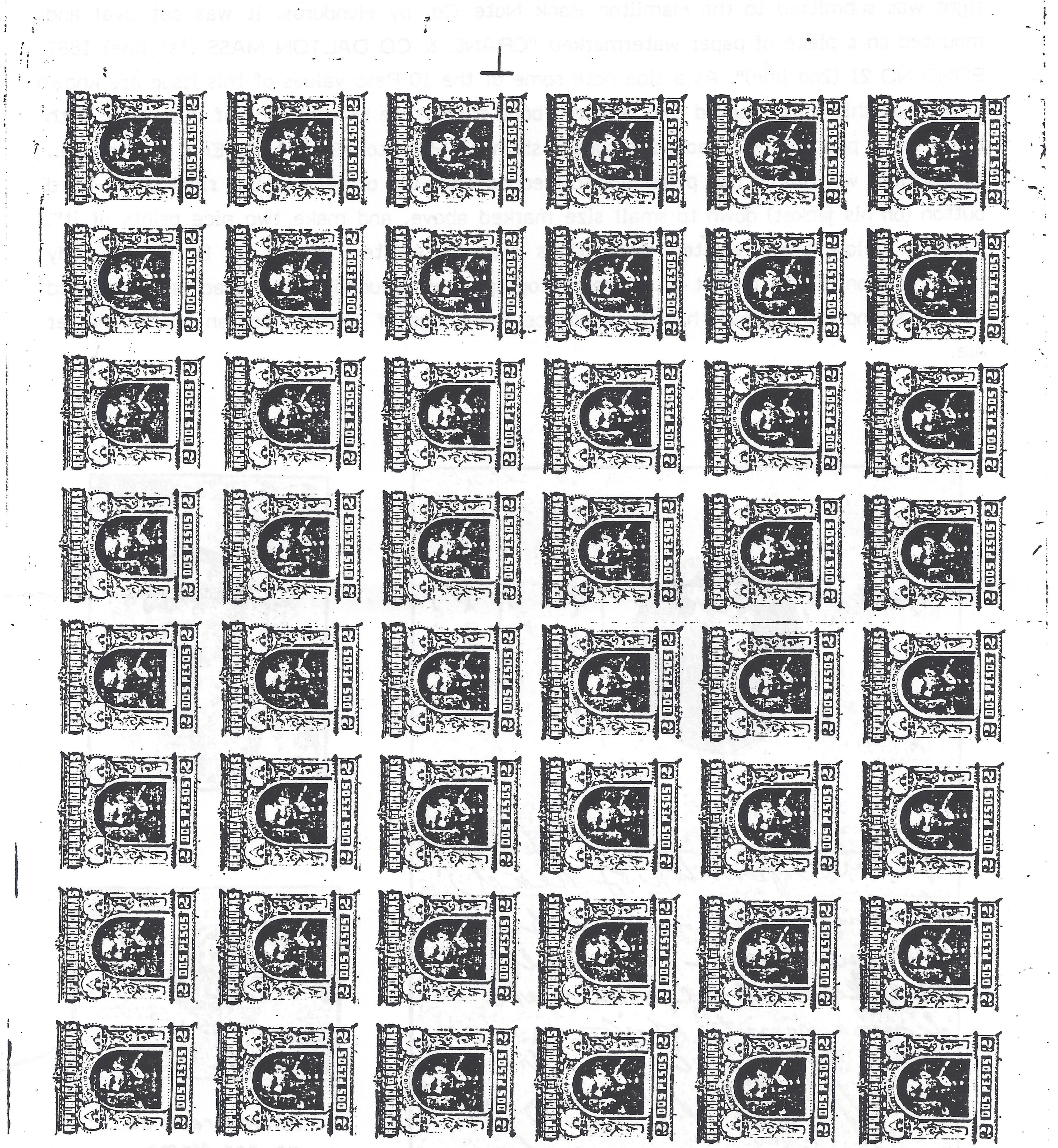

HAMILTON BANK NOTE Co NEW YORK
CENTAVO CENTAVO
SERVICIO POSTAL


HONDURAS
CENTAVOS
HAMILTON BANK NOTE Co NEW YORK

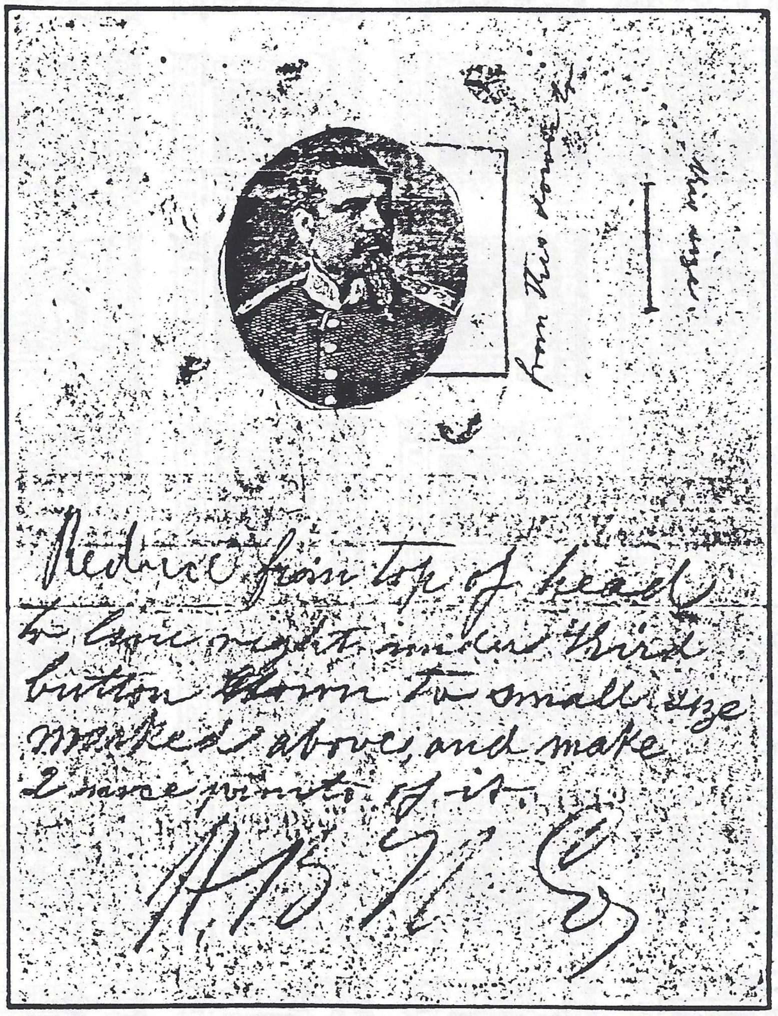

10 CENTAVOS 10
Hamilton Bank Note En'g & Pt'g Co. New York


REPUBLICA DE HONDURAS
20 CENTAVOS 20

As for the 1891 "Bogran" issue I have a complete sheet of the 5 ctv stamp 20 horizontal by 10 vertical (200 subjects total) with margins but no inscriptions. It seems that this is the case with all the values. The larger size 2p, 5p and 10p bicolours were printed 9 horizontal by 6 vertical for a total of 54 subjects per sheet. Here again no marginal inscriptions.


REPUBLICA DE HONDURAS
SERVICIO POSTAL
DOS PESOS
2

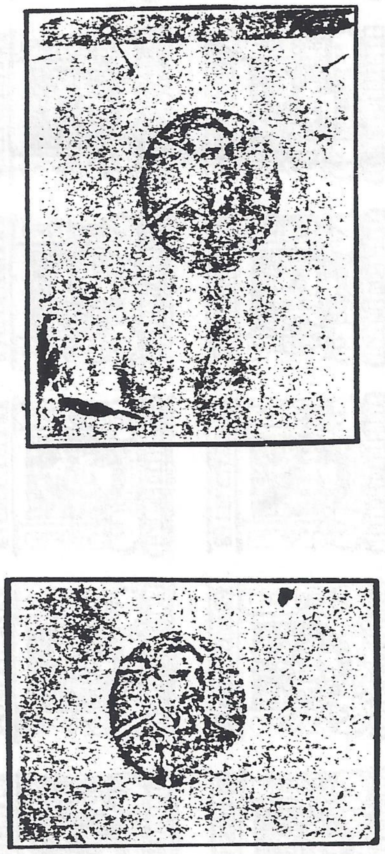
Let us examine what we know about this issue. It is the only one from Honduras that required a photograph of a person. Luis Bogran, General and then President of the Republic (term 30 November 1887 to 30 November 1891). The photograph of Bogran looking to the right was submitted to the Hamilton Bank Note Co. by Honduras. It was cut oval and mounted on a piece of paper watermarked "CRANE & CO DALTON MASS (1st line) 1889 BOND NO 21 (2nd line)". As a side note some of the 10 Peso values of this issue are known printed on this watermarked thin textured bond paper. The reverse face of this paper with the original photograph attached is rubber stamped Hamilton Bank Note Eng. & Ptg. Co.. Instructions written on this paper are to "reduce from top of head to line right under third button (on his jacket) down to small size marked above, and make two nice prints of it". Directly below these written instructions are the written initials H. B. N. Co.. My interpretation of this is that after the photograph was reduced to the exact size required for the stamp the engraver had to reproduce the image of General Bogran on the master die.



from this down to

this size

Reduce from top of head
to line right under third
button down to small size
marked above, and make
2 nice prints of it.
H B N Co

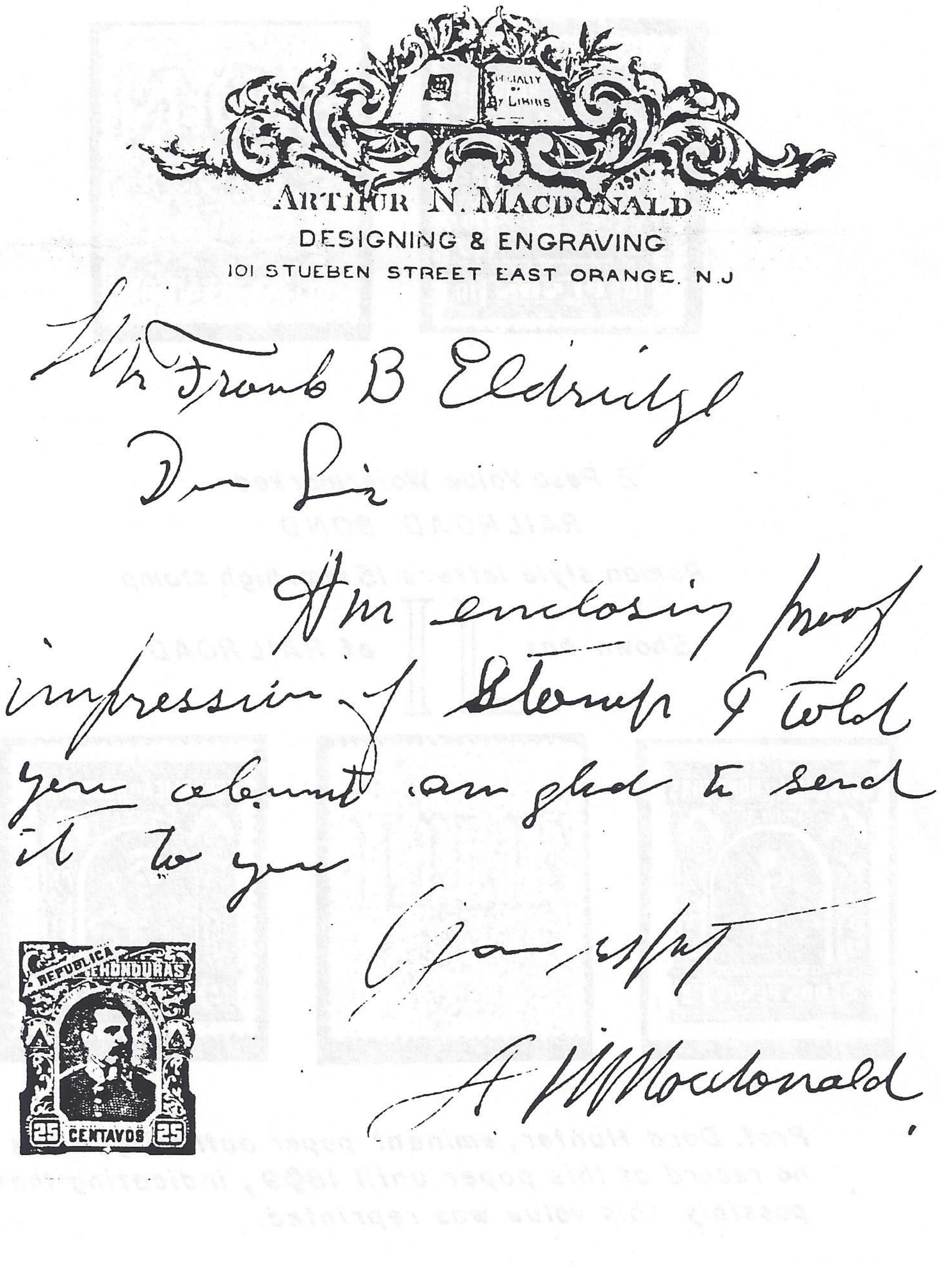


Photos reduced as per Memo

The lower values of this issue up to the 1 Peso depict the vignette as instructed from the photograph. The three buttons of his jacket show and he faces left. The three higher values of bicoloured stamps in a larger format, however, have the General facing right and only two jacket buttons really show and the jacket overlaps in the opposite direction (a mirror image?).

A few years back I acquired an item that may help determine why the Hamilton did not put their inscription on these stamps. It is a letterhead note to a known philatelist of the early part of this century, Mr Frank B Eldridge, APS #3245 (joined in 1908 at age 44). The note is written by Mr Arthur N Macdonald - Designing & Engraving - of 101 Stueben Street, East Orange, N.J..

It has a plate proof of the 25 ctv Bogran stamp (Scott #56) glued to the left bottom corner and says "Am enclosing proof impression of stamp I told you about am glad to send it to you. Yours respt. A. N. Macdonald".


REPUBLICA DE HONDURAS
25 CENTAVOS 25

ARTHUR N. MACDONALD
DESIGNING & ENGRAVING
101 STUEBEN STREET EAST ORANGE, N.J

Mr Frank B Eldridge
Dear Sir

Am enclosing proof impression of Stamp I told you about am glad to send it to you

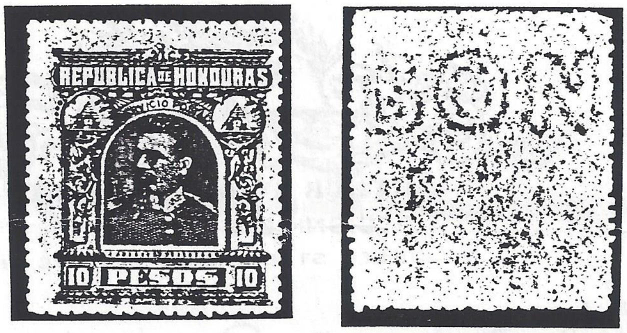
Yours respt

A N Macdonald

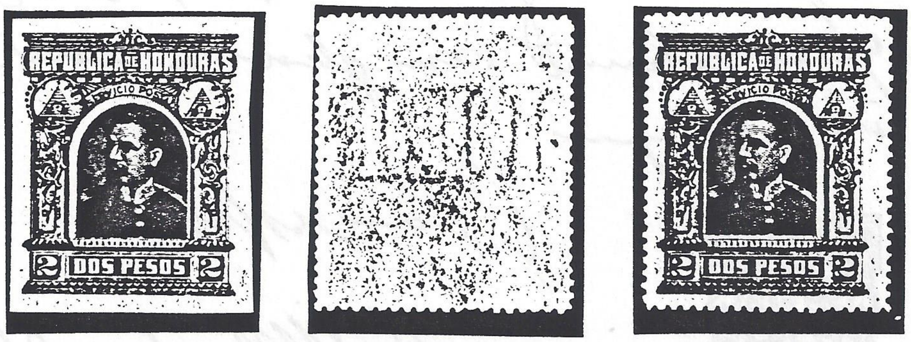
This to me certainly indicates that Mr Macdonald was involved in or actually did the design and engraving of the Bogran issue stamps. Perhaps this would explain why there are no marginal inscriptions by the Hamilton Bank Note Co. on this issue.

I would truly appreciate any further information and/or corrections as to the content of this article.

1891
Bogran Issue Varieties
10 Peso Value Watermarked
CRANE & Co. DALTON, MASS.
1889 Bond No. 21
Watermarked only once in a full sheet
(9 x 6) Letters are 12 mm. high, double
lined. Stamp shown has the BON *of BOND*


REPUBLICA DE HONDURAS
10 PESOS 10
BON

2 Peso Value Watermarked
RAILROAD BOND
Roman style letters 15 mm. high stamp
Shown has JI *of RAILROAD*


REPUBLICA DE HONDURAS
2 DOS PESOS 2
REPUBLICA DE HONDURAS
2 DOS PESOS 2

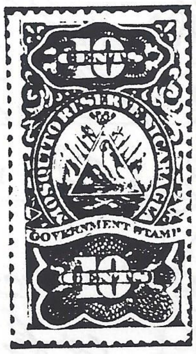
Prof. Dard Hunter, eminent paper authority, finds no record of this paper until 1899, indicating that possibly this value was reprinted.

THE REVENUE STAMPS OF NICARAGUA

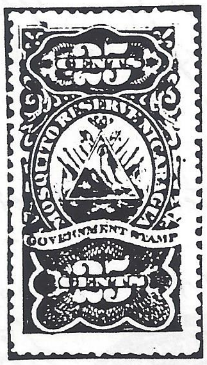
by MICHAEL P BIRKS, FRPSL

A shortage of space during our recent series on the revenue stamps of Nicaragua prevented me from illustrating two items from my own collection. This I do now.

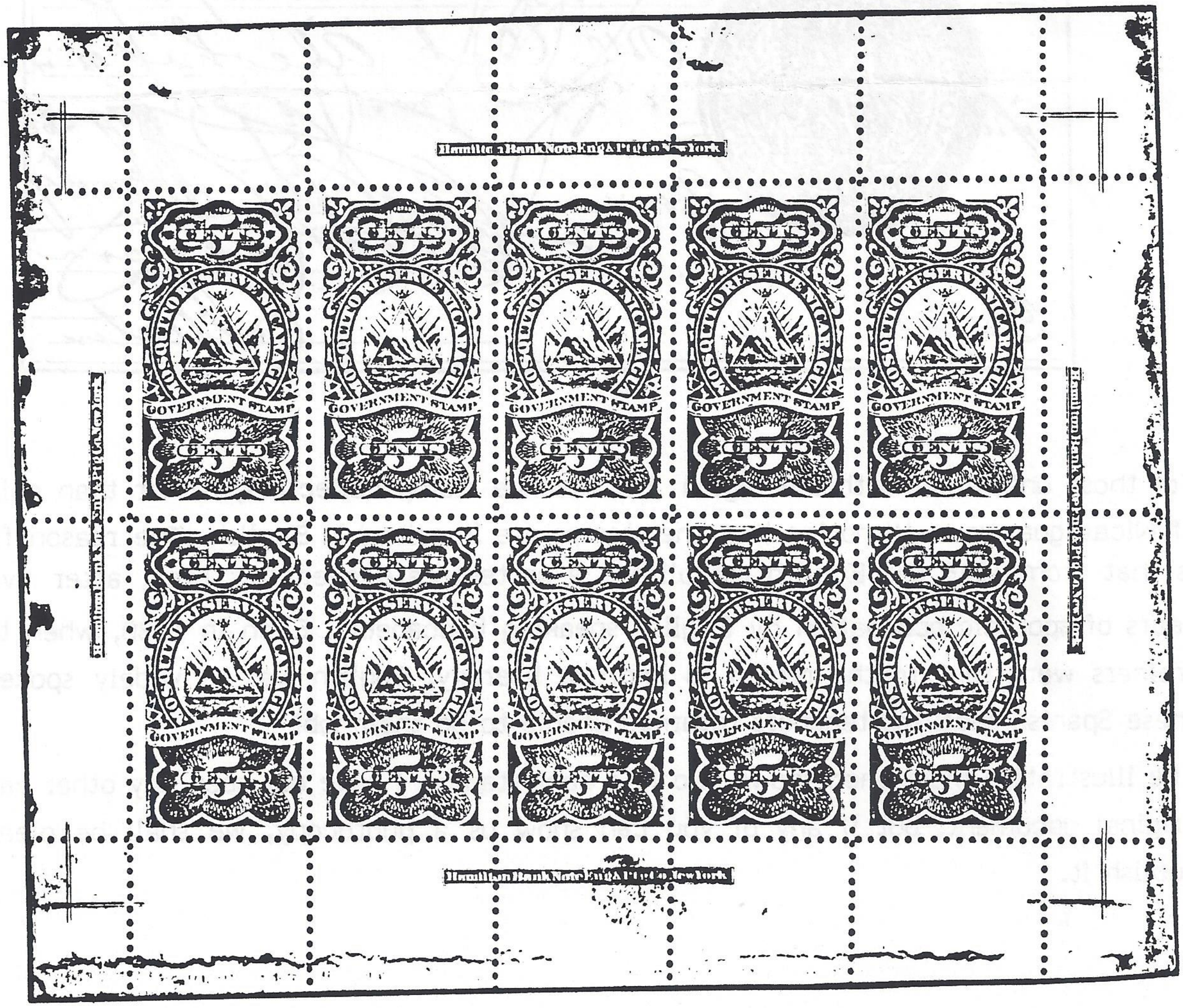
The first is a sheet of 10 of the 5c Mosquito Reserve Government Stamps which are printed on rather thick paper. The marks on the edges are caused by the dark gum seeping through to the front of the stamps. It is interesting to note that they were printed by the Hamilton Bank Note Company and therefore probably in the 1890s. Forbin suggests 1899 but others have suggested as early as 1894.



10 CENTS
MOSQUITO RESERVE NICARAGUA
GOVERNMENT STAMP
10 CENTS

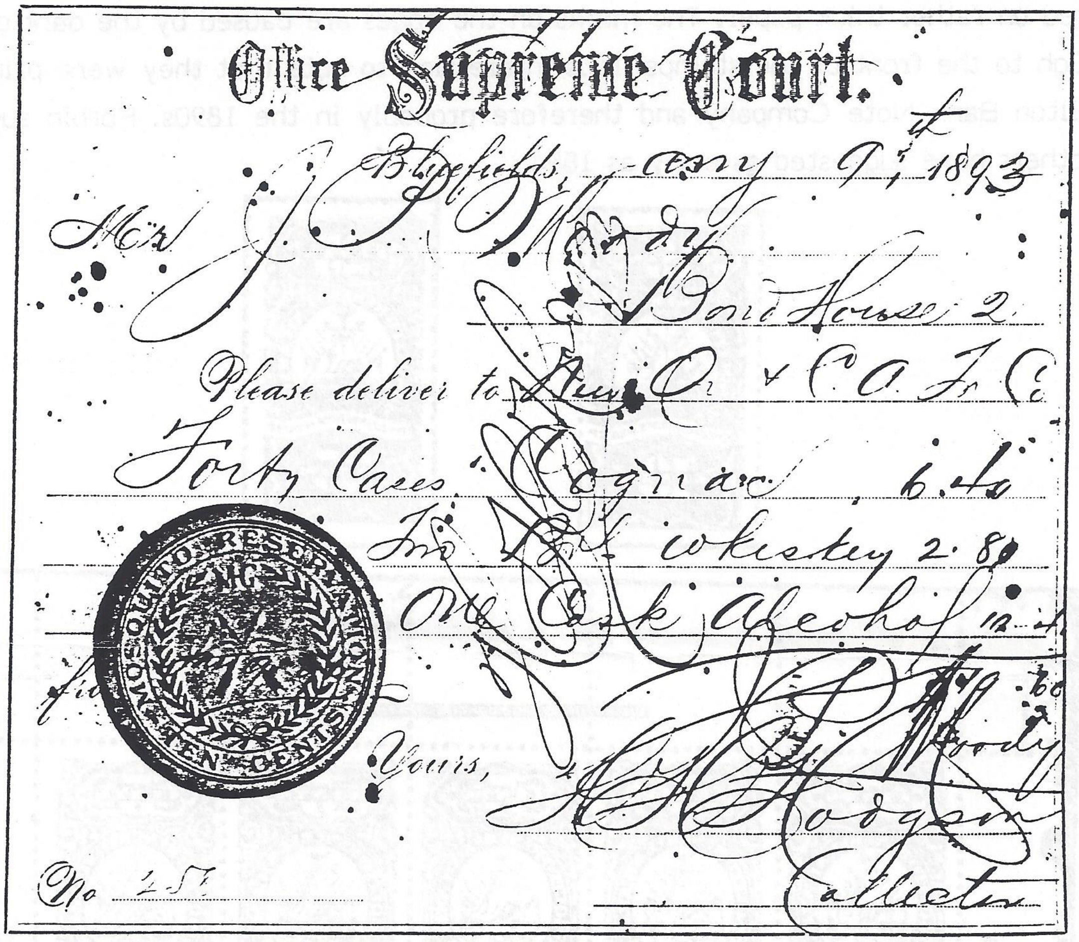


25 CENTS
MOSQUITO RESERVE NICARAGUA
GOVERNMENT STAMP
25 CENTS



Hamilton Bank Note Eng & Ptg Co New York
5 CENTS
MOSQUITO RESERVE NICARAGUA
GOVERNMENT STAMP
Hamilton Bank Note Eng & Ptg Co New York

The second item is an example of the 10c Mosquito Coast customs stamp on a recipt for alcohol, signed by the Tax Collector, Mr J H Hodgson. These stamps are listed by Forbin as being issued in 1898, which is clearly wrong. This document, numbered 258, is clearly dated 1893, whilst a similar document, numbered 169, dated 4 October 1892, is illustrated in "The American Revenuer", Vol. 31, N°.6, of June 1977.



Office Supreme Court.

Bluefields, may 9th 1893

Mr J. P. Moody

Bond House 2.

Please deliver to [illegible] & C.O. [illegible]

Forty Cases Cognac 6.40

Two [illegible] whiskey 2.80

One Cask Alcohol 12.[illegible]

.60

MOSQUITO RESERVATION TEN CENTS

Yours,

J. H. Hodgson

Collector

No 258

For those unfamiliar with the region i.e. revenue stamp collectors, rather than collectors of Nicaragua, you will notice that the stamps are inscribed in English. The reason for this is that from 1848 the English established a protectorate over this area, after over 200 years of sporadic occupation by English speaking buccaneers. Even in 1980, when teacher trainers were sent to the region to improve literacy, English was so widely spoken that these Spanish speaking teachers returned unable to do their job!

The illustration mentioned shows two five cent stamps. I have not seen any other values on original document, but if any of you can show us a photocopy, we shall be pleased to publish it.

THE RAILWAYS OF CUBA - Part 1

by DR ANTHONY GOODBODY

Introduction

Cuba is the largest island in the West Indies. It has an area of 44,218 square miles and is roughly 780 miles long by 55 miles wide. The economy of the country is largely based on sugar and tobacco.

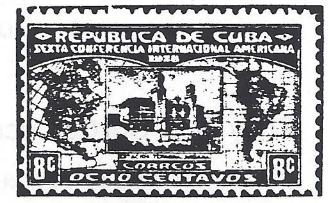
The island was discovered by Columbus in 1492 and became a Spanish colony in 1513. It remained a Spanish possession even after the breakup of most of her American Empire in the early part of the eighteenth century. However, risings against Spanish rule lead to wars of independence from 1868 to 1878 and 1895 to 1898. The United States was drawn into the conflict when, in 1898, the battleship 'Maine' was blown up in Havana harbour. The country was placed under U.S. military rule until 1902 when it became an independent republic, although having certain ties with the United States. In 1959, following a revolution, a socialist state was set up under Dr Fidel Castro.

The first railway was opened on 19 November 1837 between Paraderos de Garcia and Bejucal. It was part of a line between Havana and Guines. Authorisation for the construction of the railway had been signed by Queen Isabella of Spain on 12 October 1834, fourteen years before the opening of the first railway in Spain itself.

By 1935 there were fifteen railway companies with over 4,000 route miles between them. The principal system was the United Railways of Havana, with a route mileage of 1,367. By 1970 the route mileage had been reduced to 2,780 miles of standard guage and 70 miles of narrow guage. The entire system is now operated by Cuba National Railways. In addition there are some 6,200 miles of sugar railways, 65% of which are standard guage.

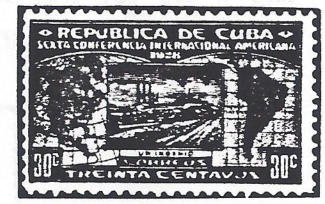
6th Pan-American Congress, 1928. (SG 357)

The Havana terminus of the United Railways of Havana. It was built at the time of the Great War of American terracotta. The style was Spanish Renaissance with the waiting room, concourse, cafe and bar finished in Italian marble. Twin towers carried the arms of the railway companies.



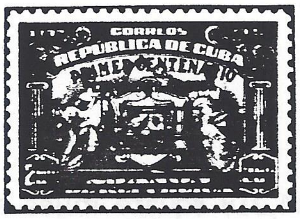
6th Pan-American Congress, 1928. (SG 424)

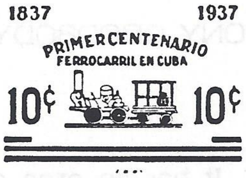
Sugar mill with railway tracks and wagons.



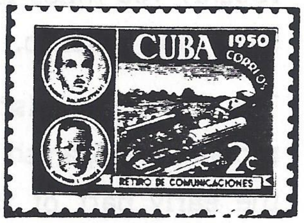
Railway Centenary, 1937. (SG 424)

The event commemorated here was referred to in the introduction. The choice of subject for the overprint is curious, having apparently no connection with Cuba.


CORREOS
REPUBLICA DE CUBA
PRIMER CENTENARIO


1837
1937
PRIMER CENTENARIO
FERROCARRIL EN CUBA
10¢
10¢

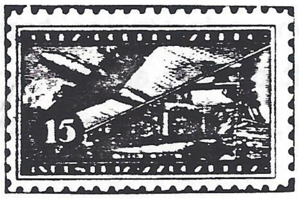
It is an outline drawing of the Mowhawk & Hudson RR 'De Witt Clinton', built by the West Point Foundry Association of 1831, and the first locomotive to run in New York State.


CUBA 1950
CORREOS
2c
RETIRO DE COMUNICACIONES

Postal Employees Retirement Fund, 1950. (SG 545-547)

The spectacular accident seen here is simulated with toy trains. Also on the stamps are two postal clerks, Manuel Balanzategul and Antonio L Pausa, who perished in a train accident in 1947.

Sugar Industry, 1954. (SG 701)



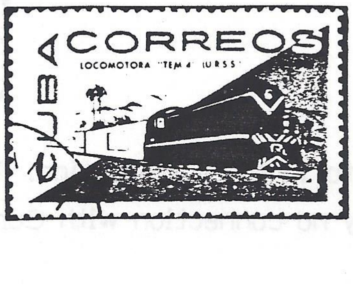
Train load of sugar cane. There are well over 100 sugar plantations in Cuba, many of them with extensive railway systems. Typically they operated from five to ten steam locomotives.

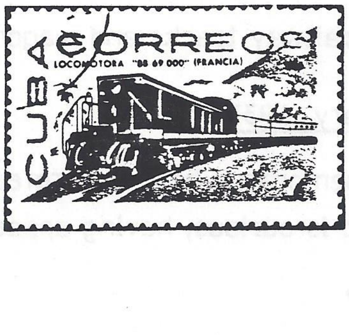
Cuban Transport, 1965. (SG 1313)

In 1966 Cuba imported 80 diesel locomotives, 40 from the Soviet Union, 30 from France and 10 from Great Britain. The Soviet diesels were type TEM-1, and one of these is shown on this stamp. The inscription 'TEM-4' seems to be incorrect. Possibly it is the designation of the standard guage export version of type TEM-1.

Weight in working order	123 t
Length over buffers	16,970 mm
Maximum speed	90 km/h
Diameter of driving wheels	1050 mm
Cylinders (6) (diam x stroke)	317 x 330 mm
Rated power	1000 hp
Maximum tractive effort	36,000 kg
Continuous tractive effort @ 9 km/h	20,000 kg

They are Co-Co locomotives, first built for the Soviet railways in 1958 by the Briansk Works, powered by a single type D-50, 6 cylinder, 4-stroke diesel engine. The data quoted above are for the Soviet broad gauge version. Data for the standard gauge version are probably slightly different.


CUBA
CORREOS
LOCOMOTORA "TEM 4" (URSS)

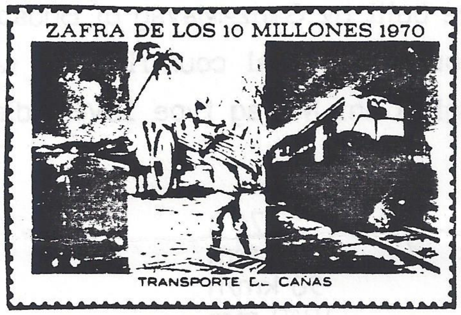

CUBA
CORREOS
LOCOMOTORA "DE 69 000" (FRANCIA)

Cuban Transport, 1965. (SG 1314)

The 7¢ value features one of the French locomotives and again, the stamp appears to be inscribed incorrectly. The locomotive is Bo-Bo type BB-63,000 built by Brissoneau et Lotz. Altogether 1,148 were constructed during the period 1953-57, 770 for SNCF (by whom they are classified BB-63,000), 124 for French private railways and 254 for export to Spain, Portugal, Chile, Yugoslavia and Cuba.

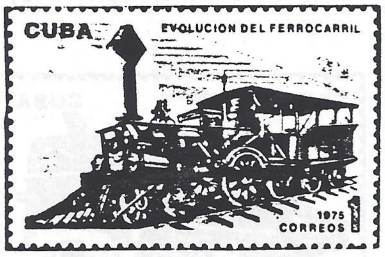
Weight in working order	68 t
Length over buffers	14,680 mm
Maximum speed	80 km/h
Diameter of driving wheels	1050 mm
Cylinders (6) (diam x stroke)	220 x 290 mm
Continuous output of diesel engine @ 950 rpm	800 hp
Maximum tractive effort	17,000 kg
Continuous tractive effort @ 15 km/h	11,000 kg

Sugar Industry, 1970. (SG 1778)



Type S1 standard diesel-electric locomotive manufactured by Brush electrical machines Ltd.. It is basically a metre guage machine with a 1050 hp engine and monomotor bogies (i.e. B-B). However, it can be fitted with 500 hp or 720 hp engines and can be adapted to any gauge from 2 ft upwards. Seven of the 720 hp varsion were exported to Cuba and one of these is shown here.

Evolution of the Railway, 1975. (SG 2242)

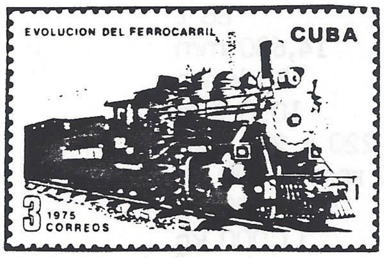


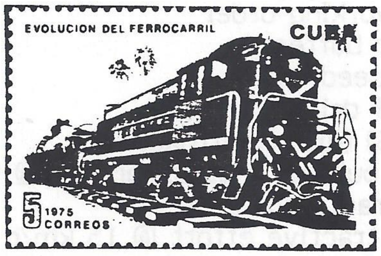
Although carrying the number 1, this locomotive was not the first to run in Cuba which dates from 1837. This one is 'La Junta' built as a 4-2-0 for the Matanzas Railroad and subsequently rebuilt as a 4-2-2. It is widely reported to have been built by Norris in 1841/2 but no other sources give the builder as Rogers, and the date 1843. The reason for this is no doubt the inscription on the splasher (just visible on the stamp) which reads: 'R K & G NJ' (Rogers, Kechum & Grosvenor, New Jersey). In pre-war days it was preserved at the Havana terminus of the United Railways of Havana (see SG 357). Now it is displayed near the tourist railway in Lenin Park (see SG 2865).

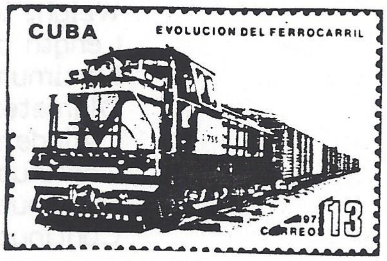
Evolution of the Railways, 1975. (SG 2243)

A Baldwin 'Consolidation' (2-8-0) of which 17 were delivered to Cuba in 1920. The locomotives were numbered in the 500s but the locomotive on the stamp carries the number 12 and the legend 'M M Prieto'. This is in fact the name of a sugar mill Manuel Martinez Prieto, Nº.213 in La Habana Province. The mill was formerly known as 'Toledo'. It has 45 km of standard guage track and is now believed to have been dieselised.

Evolution of the Railways, 1975. (SG 2244)
The cab end of a Soviet TEM-1 diesel (see SG 1313).


EVOLUCION DEL FERROCARRIL
CUBA
3
1975
CORREOS


EVOLUCION DEL FERROCARRIL
CUBA
5
1975
CORREOS

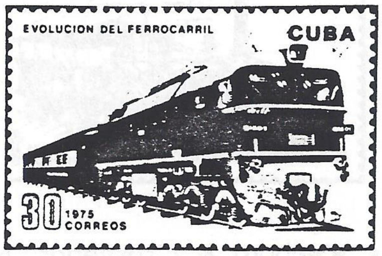

CUBA
EVOLUCION DEL FERROCARRIL
1975
CORREOS
13

Evolution of the Railways, 1975. (SG 2245)

A hungarian type DVM9 Bo-Bo diesel-electric locomotive built by Ganz-Mavag of Budapest. This is a standard gauge model built specially for export to tropical countries: 10 were delivered to Cuba in 1968. They were powered by a single Ganz-Movag type 16VFE diesel engine, with electric transmission.

Weight in working order	76 t
Length over buffers	14,190 mm
Maximum speed	90 km/h
Diameter of driving wheels	1040 mm
Cylinders (16) (diam x stroke)	170 x 240 mm
Rated power	1000 hp
Maximum starting tractive effort	24,000 kg

Evolution of the Railways, 1975. (SG 2246)

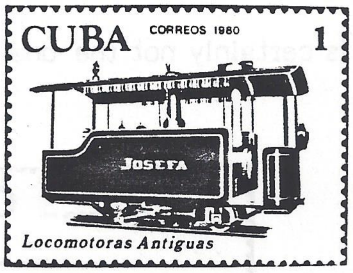

EVOLUCION DEL FERROCARRIL
CUBA
30
1975
CORREOS

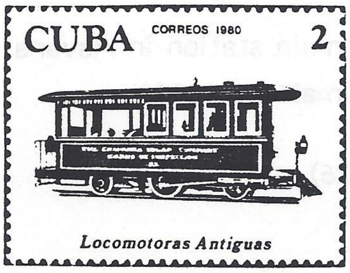
A Soviet export model, type M-62K, which is virtually one half of the Soviet class TE-3 (see SG 2299 of Russia). The same type of locomotive appears on SG 2717 of Hungary, and they have been exported to Poland, Czechoslovakia and the former German Democratic Republic. They were first delivered to Cuba in 1966. The wheel arrangement is Co-Co and they are powered by a single 14D40 Lugansk diesel engine with Kharkov electric transmission.

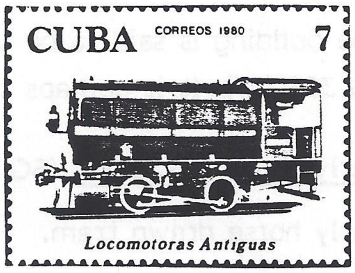
Wight in working order	116 t
Length over buffers	17,550 mm
Maximum speed	100 km/h
Diameter of driving wheels	1050 mm
Cylinders (12) (diam x stroke)	230 x 300 mm
Rated power	2000 hp
Maximum starting tractive effort	38,300 kg

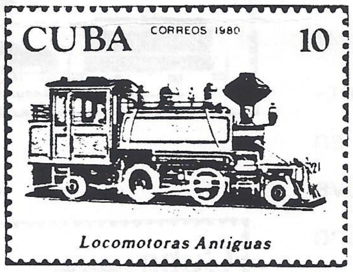
Early Locomotives, 1980. (SG 2663-2668)

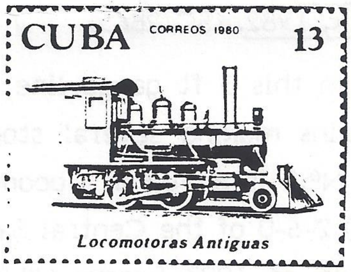
A most attractive set but information is unfortunately sparce. The first two values show self-propelled inspection carriages, the 1¢ is a 2-2-0 of the Central Josefa Lines, and the 2¢ a 2-2-2 of the Chaparra Sugar Company. The company's title is displayed in English, but 'Carro de Inspection' is in Spanish. The Chaparra Sugar Mill, now re-named Jesus Menendez, is Nº.610 in Las Tunas Province. It shares with another mill (Antonio Guiteras, Nº.611) a railway network of some 500 km of 3 ft gauge track. It is now dieseled. The 7¢ depicts a fireless locomotive of the San Francisco Sugar Estate - this is believed to be the first appearance of such a locomotive on a stamp. The San Francisco Sugar Mill Railway is just 5 km of standard gauge track. The estate has now been re-named Marta Abreu, Nº.433 in Cienfuegos Province. It was recently (1982) reported to have at least one steam locomotive and an unknown number of diesel locomotives.

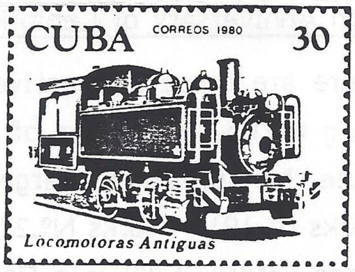

CUBA
CORREOS 1980
1
JOSEFA
Locomotoras Antiguas


CUBA
CORREOS 1980
2
Locomotoras Antiguas


CUBA
CORREOS 1980
7
Locomotoras Antiguas


CUBA
CORREOS 1980
10
Locomotoras Antiguas

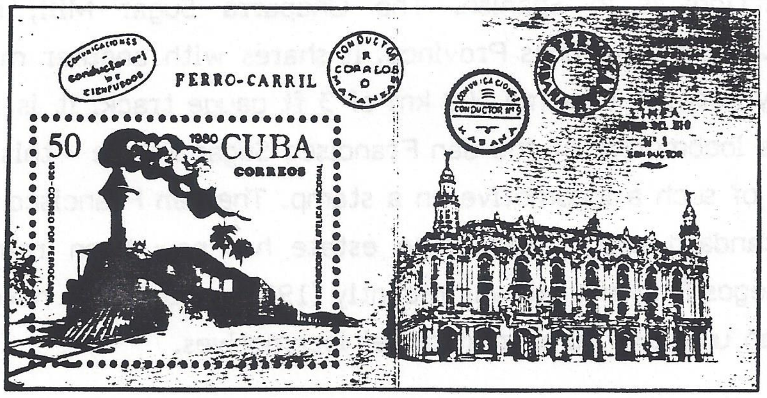

CUBA
CORREOS 1980
13
Locomotoras Antiguas


CUBA
CORREOS 1980
30
Locomotoras Antiguas

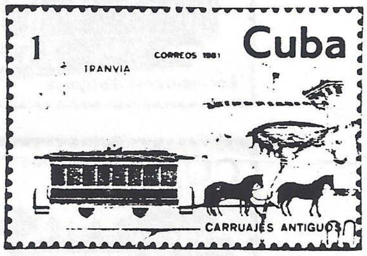
On the 10¢ value we have a 2-4-2 saddle-tank of the Australia Estate (Nº.303 in Matanzas Province - this one did not change its name at the time of the Revolution) which has 30 km of standard gauge track, and had four steam locomotives and one diesel. The 13¢ value shows an outside frames 2-4-0. An early Baldwin catalogue* shows a 3 ft or metre gauge 2-4-0, class 6C with similar features apart from the outside frames. Finally, on the 30¢, there is a Porter 0-4-0 oil-fired side-tank engine built in 1909 and used on the Smith Comas estate, formerly known as Progreso, Nº.315 in Matanzas Province. This estate has over 25 km of standard track, and had four steam locomotives and one diesel.

7th National Philatelic Exhibition, 1980. (SG MS2681)

This stamp shows a somewhat fanciful rendering of the locomotive 'La Junta' (see SG 2242) said to be heading the first mail train in Cuba. More authentic are the railway postmarks and cachets which appear in the margin. They appear without exception to be mail guard marks. The mail guard, perhaps only occupying a small compartment at the end of a passenger or baggage car, would have collected and distributed mail at stations along the route, and may also have had charge of sealed bags of mail. He would not however have undertaken sorting duties such as are carried out in a travelling post office.



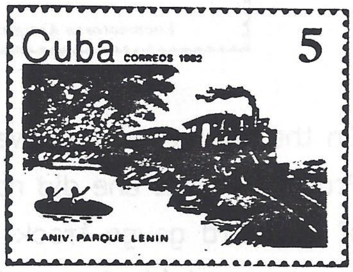
The building is said to be the main station in Havana. It is certainly not the one shown on SG 357 (qv). It is perhaps the main Post Office.



Early Carriages, 1981. (SG 2726)

Early horse drawn tram.

10th Anniversary of Lenin Park, 1982. (SG 2865)



There are three locomotives on this 3 ft gauge line operating an hourly service of trains making several stops en route. No fares are charged. N°.1 is a Vulcan Locomotive Works of 1917 (works N°.2761) 2-6-0 of the Central Sandino Sugar Estate. N°.2 is a Baldwin of 1923 (works N°.56920) 2-6-0. It is said to be at the Central Ruben Martinez Villena Estate awaiting restoration. N°.3, also an ex Sandino 2-6-0 is a Baldwin of 1913 (works N°.40595). The stamp appears to show N°.1

* * *

I have not had any new material for the PT list and so you will not find one enclosed with this issue. There are, however, still a lot of items left and enquiries are invited. If you would like to 'bid' for any of the items, please feel free to do so, as some vendors do give lattitude with the pricings.

WANTED Nicaragua Scott N°.415, but the printing of 1928, in unused condition. This stamp is larger than the 1922 printing and a different shade of black brown. The overprint 'CORREOS 1928' is over this stamp.

mpb

"THROUGH UNKNOWN NICARAGUA"

by DEREK PALMER FRPS,L

In the early years of this century my uncle, Mervyn G Palmer, went to Nicaragua hunting for bugs, moths and beetles and other species living in the wilds of that country. Many years later, in 1945, he published a book "Through Unknown Nicaragua" (Jarrolds Publishers (London) Ltd., 47 Princes Gate, SW7) the sub-title of which was "The Adventures of a Naturalist on a Wild-Goose Chase".

It was this uncle who introduced me to philately, for which I am eternally grateful. In the book there is a page or so about the postage stamps of Nicaragua which I reproduce here.

"Through Unknown Nicaragua"

by MERVYN G PALMER, FRGS, MBOU

> "Although I was not an active philatelist when in Nicaragua, the old habit - acquired in school-days - forced me to take care of all the postage stamps that came my way, and I suppose that there are indeed few countries which yield so much material for profitable study to enthusiasts. In Messrs. Stanley Gibbons & Co.'s catalogue, there are no less than 2,255 distinct varieties of Nicaraguan postage-stamps described. On several occasions the stocks of regular postal issues ran short, and the Government found itself reduced to the expedient of surcharging fiscal, railway, telegraph, official and postage due stamps to frank ordinary correspondence. In some instances railway stamps which had been surcharged for postal uses were again surcharged for fiscal purposes, and yet again surcharged, this time on their backs, for postage, and were affixed to letters by gum thoughtfully provided in a bottle on the post office counters! This gave rise to many interesting variations, one of which might be described as follows:
>
> One centavo railway stamp, surcharged on front '2 centavos' in olive-yellow ink for postal use, further surcharged on front '5 centavos' for fiscal use, and still further surcharged on the back '10 centavos' in black for postage, there being six varieties of the lettering of '2 centavos' olive-yellow surcharge! From this the reader will see that at one time or another the little piece of coloured paper had represented four different values, and it must have been a bit of a puzzle to the officials and even the uneducated peon to decide which was the latest of the overprints, yet I am prepared to wager that the latter had to pay 10 centavos for his stamp. The currency of the Misquito coast is all silver, whereas that of the interior, when I travelled there, was paper money with nickel coins of one and five centavos for use as small change, the lowest value bank-note being 50 centavos. As the silver and paper currencies each had different rates of exchange,this naturally led to the necessity of having varying postal rates on correspondence from Moquitia and the rest of the Republic, and to meet this and to prevent stamps bought with low-valued paper-money being resold for high-valued silver money, all stamps sent to the Atlantic Coast for franking letters bore some distinguishing mark in the form of an overprint, such as 'Depto. de Zelaya'; 'B' (for Bluefields); 'C','Cabo' or 'Cabo Gracias' (for Cape Gracias), or simply 'Costa Atlantica'.

Some issues were properly overprinted by machinery, others being simply stamped by hand with a rubber stamp, and it is amongst the latter that the greatest prizes - to the philatelist - are to be found. Early in 1904 I bought in the post office and used on my letters stamps overprinted with a rubber stamp, 'Cabo Gracias a Dios', which are so very rare that they do not even appear in the catalogue I have mentioned, and I have read that stamps with this overprint were never issued! Not knowing their rarity, I bought only such as I needed for my correspondence, and a few 'to save' at their face value, but in later years I found out how very valuable to collectors they really were. Amongst others I bought several of that exceedingly rare stamp, the 15 centavos ultramarine of 1904-5 overprinted by hand 'Cabo', which is rarely offered for sale in England, but which I have seen quoted in Continental lists at 75 gold francs per stamp. If I had only known it at the time, I would have laid in a stock, and who knows but what that wild goose of mine would have had the little coloured bits of paper in place of feathers."

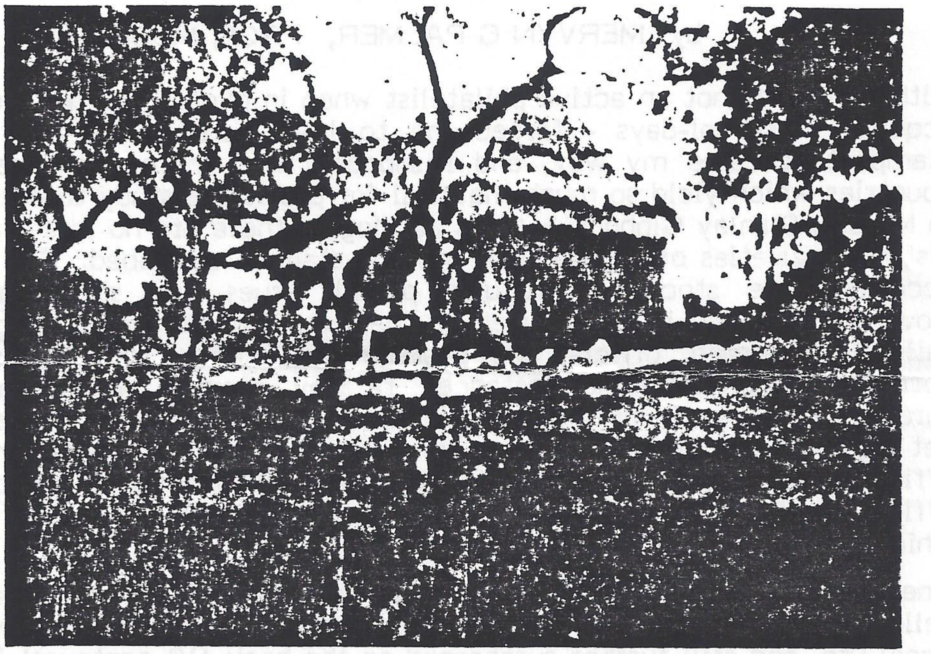


Fig. 1 A PEASANT'S HOUSE NEAR CAMOAPA

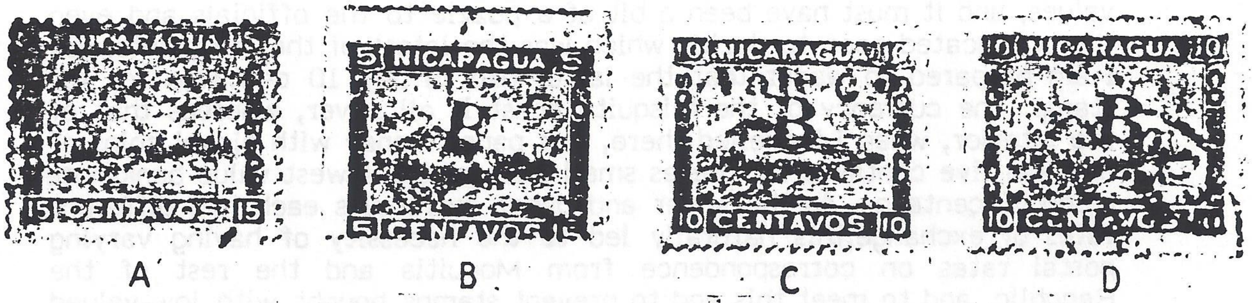


Fig. 2 NICARAGUAN POSTAGE STAMPS. (a) The engraved 15 centavos, blue, issued in 1900. (b) The lithographed 5 centavos, blue, of 1902 overprinted: "B Depto. Zelaya," for use in Bluefields. (c) The lithographed 10 centavos, mauve, with same overprint and surcharged "Vale ¢ 5." (d) The same without the surcharge